

good cross-country mobility of its tracked vehicles, General Kravchenko decided to shift the 5th Guards Tank Corps into the first echelon of his right wing march column. He pulled out the 9th Guards Mechanized Corps because of its wheeled vehicles and lack of sufficient fuel.\* The shift occurred on the afternoon of the tenth. The crossing of the Grand Khingan Mountains would be along two axes. In the north, 7th Guards Mechanized Corps would cross near Mokotan using two roads (trails). In the south, 5th Guards Tank Corps with 9th Mechanized Corps in second echelon would cross east of Yukoto on one road. The 5th Guards Tank Corps began weaving its way through the mountains late on the afternoon of the tenth. The 7th Guards Mechanized Corps began crossing the next morning.

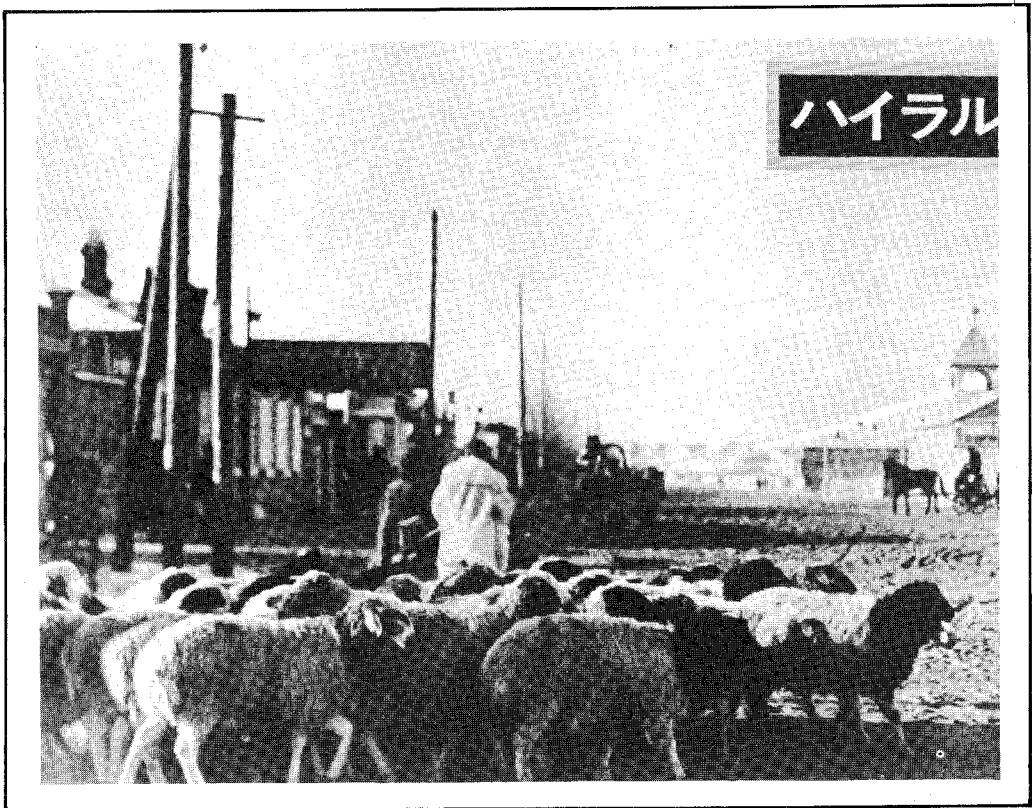


**Managarov, Ivan Mefod'evich (1898—?), 53d Army**

1917—(Apr) joined Red Guards; commander, Enakievsk Red Guards Detachment; regimental commander.  
 1923—Cavalry School.  
 1923—commander, cavalry subunits (Leningrad, Turkestan Military Districts).  
 1926—secretary of party bureau of cavalry regiment (Volga Military District).  
 1931—Military Political Academy.  
 1931—commissar, mechanized regiment; commissar, cavalry regiment.  
 1938—(Nov) commander, cavalry division.  
 1941—commander, 26th Rifle Corps (Far East).  
 1942—commander, 16th Cavalry Corps; 7th Cavalry Corps (Bryansk, Kalinin, and Northwest Fronts).  
 1942—(Dec) commander, 41st Army.  
 1943—(Mar) commander, 53d Army (Kursk, Belgorod-Kharkov, Uman-Botoshansk, Iassy-Kishinev, Budapest, Prague operations).  
 1946—army commander.  
 1949—service in PVO (air defense) forces.  
 1953—retired.

At 2300 on the tenth, the 5th Guards Tank Corps reached Tsagondabo, the highest point of passage through the Grand Khingans. In darkness and rain this corps continued to the eastern exits from the mountain pass. The 5th Guards Tank Corps traversed forty kilometers of pass in seven hours, a feat made possible by the fact that the column consisted only of tracked vehicles. Farther north, the 7th Guards Mechanized Corps, impeded by its large number of wheeled vehicles, completed passage of the mountains during the evening of the eleventh. Both columns entered the central Manchurian plain and continued rapidly eastward. On 11 August, the lead brigade of 5th Guards Tank Corps reached Lupei. The following day lead units of the 7th Guards Mechanized Corps reached Tuchuan. The 6th Guards Tank Army reached both objectives on the fourth day of an operation planned for five days.<sup>12</sup> There was no Japanese opposition.

\*The 9th Guards Mechanized Corps was equipped with American Sherman tanks, whose mobility was more limited than the T-34 tank and whose fuel consumption was higher.



Hailar

Audacity had paid off. The speed of the advance surpassed Soviet expectations. The 6th Guards Tank Army covered 350 kilometers over difficult terrain in three days, preempting the ability of Japanese forces to react quickly enough to block the advance of the tank army. After 12 August, only logistical difficulties limited the Soviet advance. Pressure on other fronts and the collapse of the western sector would make it exceedingly difficult for the Japanese to restore a viable defensive line and to stave off total collapse.

Japanese opposition to the Soviet-Mongolian Cavalry-Mechanized Group, the 17th Army, and the 6th Guards Tank Army was limited or nonexistent. Small groups of Inner Mongolian horse cavalry from the 1st Cavalry Division stationed north of Kalgan outposted the border. Offering little resistance to the Soviet mechanized and horse cavalry advance, they fell back to their base. The Japanese 108th Infantry Division at Jehol had an infantry battalion at Chihfeng and a company at Linhsi in the zone of advance of the 17th Army. The Japanese 63d Infantry Division at Tunglaio had an

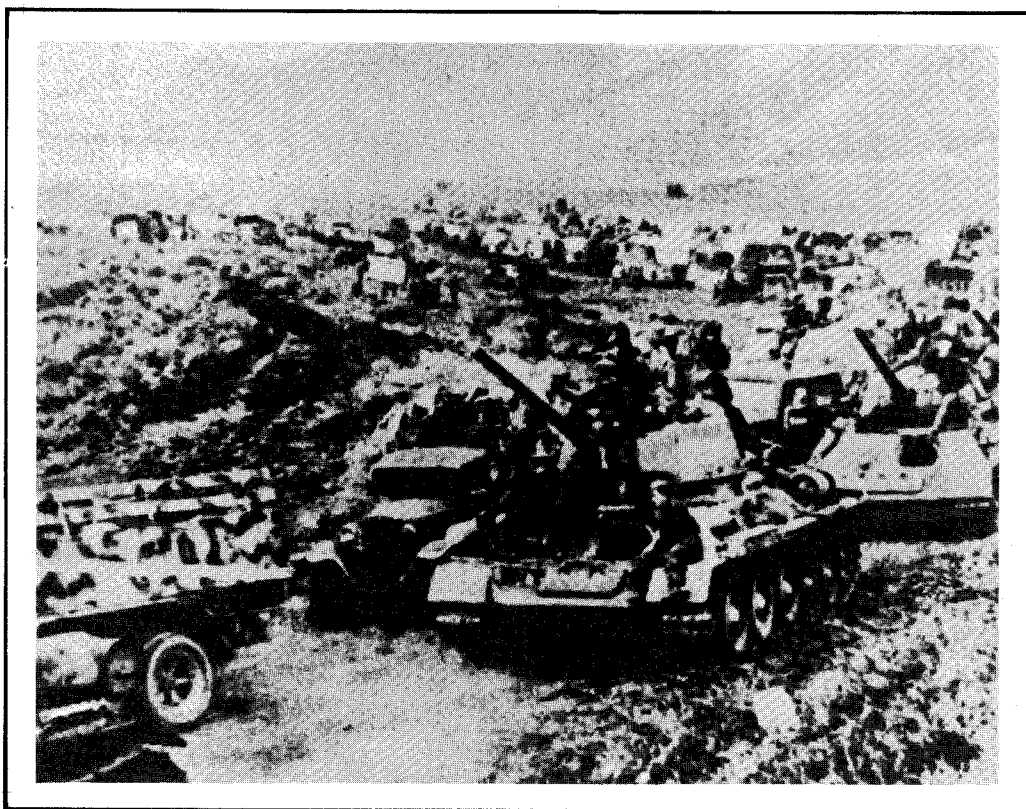
infantry battalion at Kailu, but no division units moved northwest to block 6th Guards Tank Army's advance. The 117th Infantry Division at Taonan dispatched one infantry battalion and an antitank battalion about thirty kilometers west on the Tuchuan road on 10 August to intercept advancing



6th Guards Tank Army tanks crossing the Grand Khingan Mountains

Soviet tank columns. On the same day, however, the Japanese 44th Army ordered both the 63d and the 117th Infantry Divisions to redeploy eastward to Mukden and Hsinking (Changchun), respectively. Neither division engaged Soviet forces in combat. Further resistance to the advance of the Soviet-Mongolian Cavalry-Mechanized Group, the 17th Army, and the 6th Guards Tank Army came only from Inner Mongolian forces operating out of Kalgan and from minor elements of the Japanese 108th Infantry Division. Other Japanese units in west central Manchuria withdrew eastward. In the zone of advance of the 39th Army, only the 107th Infantry Division, small elements of the 117th Infantry Division, and random unattached 44th Army units and local Manchurian forces resisted.<sup>13</sup> The story was different, however, in northwest Manchuria, where Japanese opposition severely hindered the advance of the Soviet 36th Army.

On the left flank of the 6th Guards Tank Army, the 39th Army continued to advance, with its main force bypassing portions of the Japanese 107th Infantry Division besieged in the Halung-Arshaan and Wuchakou Fortified Regions. The 5th Guards Rifle Corps moved eastward in a column of rifle divisions toward Solun and the railway station at Tepossi, meeting little opposition. The 113th Rifle Corps, also in a column of rifle divisions, advanced southeastward toward Wangyemiao, through the tortuously narrow, winding, and rain-swollen valley of the Wulan Ho. The 206th Tank Brigade and the 44th Tank Brigade led the advance of the two corps. On the afternoon of 12 August, 39th Army forces met the first Japanese opposition. Elements of the Japanese 107th Infantry Division withdrawing southeast



The 20th Tank Brigade (6th Guards Tank Army) enters the central Manchurian plain

along the railroad from Wuchakou ran into advanced elements of the 5th Guards Rifle Corps. The Soviets destroyed several train cars, dispersed the Japanese, and opened the road to Solun. Only natural obstacles of swamps and rivers slowed the Soviet advance.<sup>14</sup>

On the left flank of 39th Army, the 94th Rifle Corps advanced toward Hailar from the south. Because of the success of 36th Army operations against Hailar and because of stiff Japanese resistance at Halung-Arshaan to the 124th Rifle Division of 39th Army, General Lyudnikov, on the evening of 10 August, ordered the 94th Rifle Corps to turn its divisions southward and to rejoin the main force. The 221st Rifle Division received the surrender of General Houlin, commander of the Manchurian 10th Military District, and 1,000 of his men south of Hailar; it then marched eastward towards the Grand Khingan mountain pass at Tarchu. The 358th Rifle Division turned due south to join the 124th Rifle Division, which was engaged in reducing Japanese forces in the Halung-Arshaan Fortified Region.<sup>15</sup>



Soviet artillery firing on Japanese positions at Hailar

In the 36th Army's sector, the 205th Tank Brigade and 152d Rifle Regiment continued on 10 August to battle for the central and southwest part of Hailar city. Japanese positions on the high ground to the south and northwest poured heavy fire into attacking Soviet units. General Luchinsky, commander of 36th Army, shifted his forces to restore the momentum of

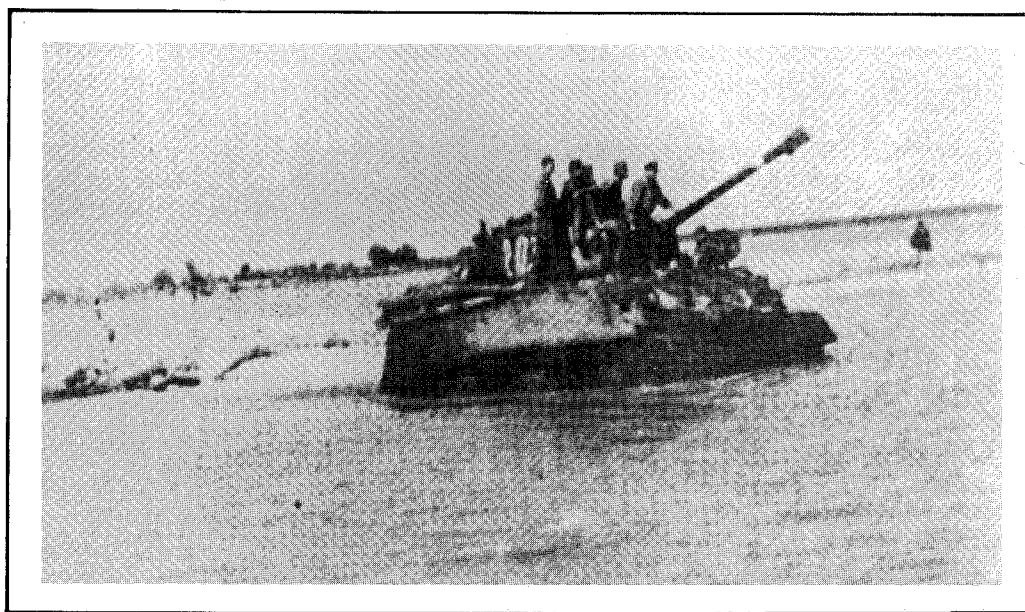
the advance beyond Hailar. He ordered the 205th Tank Brigade to withdraw from Hailar and to cooperate with the 2d Rifle Corps advancing east of Hailar. After the 2d Rifle Corps had completed its bypass of Hailar, it advanced with the 205th Tank Brigade along the railroad to Yakoshih. Units of the Japanese 119th Infantry Division defended in a series of fortified positions along the rail line from Yakoshih to Pokotu. The 36th Army commander also ordered the 94th Rifle Division of 86th Rifle Corps to replace the 205th Tank Brigade and to continue operations to secure Hailar. At 1400 on 11 August, the 94th Rifle Division, with air and artillery support, attacked and seized the southwest portion of Hailar city. Japanese units withdrew to the heavily fortified positions on the hills to the northwest and southwest. The 36th Army commander rushed the remainder of the 86th Rifle Corps forward to become part of a special group to reduce the Hailar forts.<sup>16</sup> On the same day, the Soviet operational group on the right flank of the 36th Army broke Japanese resistance at Manchouli and moved eastward along the rail line to join with the Soviet forces besieging Hailar.

On the fourth day of the offensive (12 August), the Soviet tide swept forward as Japanese forces defended in isolated outposts or withdrew to regroup and prepare to fight future battles. Soon the confusion of the chaotic withdrawal would be compounded by political confusion resulting from rumors of a Japanese call for a cease-fire.

Throughout 12 and 13 August on the Trans-Baikal Front's right flank, the Soviet-Mongolian formations of General Pliyev swept across the Inner Mongolian deserts towards Dolonnor and Kalgan at a rate of ninety to one hundred kilometers a day, rudely shunting aside local cavalry forces. Pliyev's principal concern was providing his forces in the vast desert wastes sufficient food, fuel, fodder, and water. On 14 August General Pliyev's left column overcame a small Manchurian cavalry force and entered Dolonnor at the east end of the pass across the southern Grand Khingan Mountains. The 17th Army also successfully crossed the Grand Khingan Mountains, and on the fourteenth its forward units captured Taopanshin.<sup>17</sup>

Progress of the 6th Guards Tank Army continued to be spectacular, although the task of resupplying the numerous armored vehicles was becoming a problem. After the 7th Guards Mechanized Corps had secured Tuchuan and the 5th Guards Tank Corps had taken Lupei, both units experienced severe fuel shortages. The 7th Guards Mechanized Corps had only half of its fuel supply, while the 5th Guards Tank Corps had only four-tenths of its fuel supply. Because the 9th Guards Mechanized Corps was short of fuel even before it crossed the Grand Khingan Mountains, it had no fuel when it arrived at Lupei.<sup>18</sup> The transportation network, which reached 700 kilometers to the rear, was badly overextended. When the campaign began, the 6th Guards Tank Army itself had 6,489 serviceable vehicles out of the 9,491 authorized by TO&E. Army automobile battalions had only 50 to 60 percent of their assigned vehicles; thus, they were capable of carrying only 500 tons of supplies. This vehicle attrition was primarily

the result of the harsh march from distant assembly areas. In order to augment the truck transportation assets of 6th Guards Tank Army, the Trans-Baikal Front attached to 6th Guards Tank Army the 47th Automobile Regiment of six battalions comprising more than 1,000 trucks. In order to transport critical supplies of fuel, the front attached to the army the 453d Aviation Battalion with 400 aircraft.<sup>19</sup> The tank army's rapid advance strained these resources to a breaking point. In order to increase fuel supplies to a level sufficient to maintain offensive momentum, the 6th Guards Tank Army began airlifting fuel to the two advanced corps on 11 August. While resorting to this expedient, the 6th Guards Tank Army commander halted his units for a two-day period (12–13 August).



Tanks of the 46th Guards Tank Brigade, 9th Guards Mechanized Corps, conduct a river crossing

On 13 August this army resumed the offensive by pushing reconnaissance units towards Tungliao and Taonan. A reinforced tank or mechanized brigade from each corps followed the reconnaissance units as each corps's forward detachment. All available fuel in each corps was put at the disposal of these forward detachments. Other units remained in static positions awaiting fuel. At nightfall on the fourteenth, after a march hindered by wet weather and by Japanese kamikaze attacks, the forward detachment of the 7th Guards Mechanized Corps occupied Taonan, while that of the 9th Guards Mechanized Corps continued to drive southeastward toward Tungliao and Kailu.<sup>20</sup>

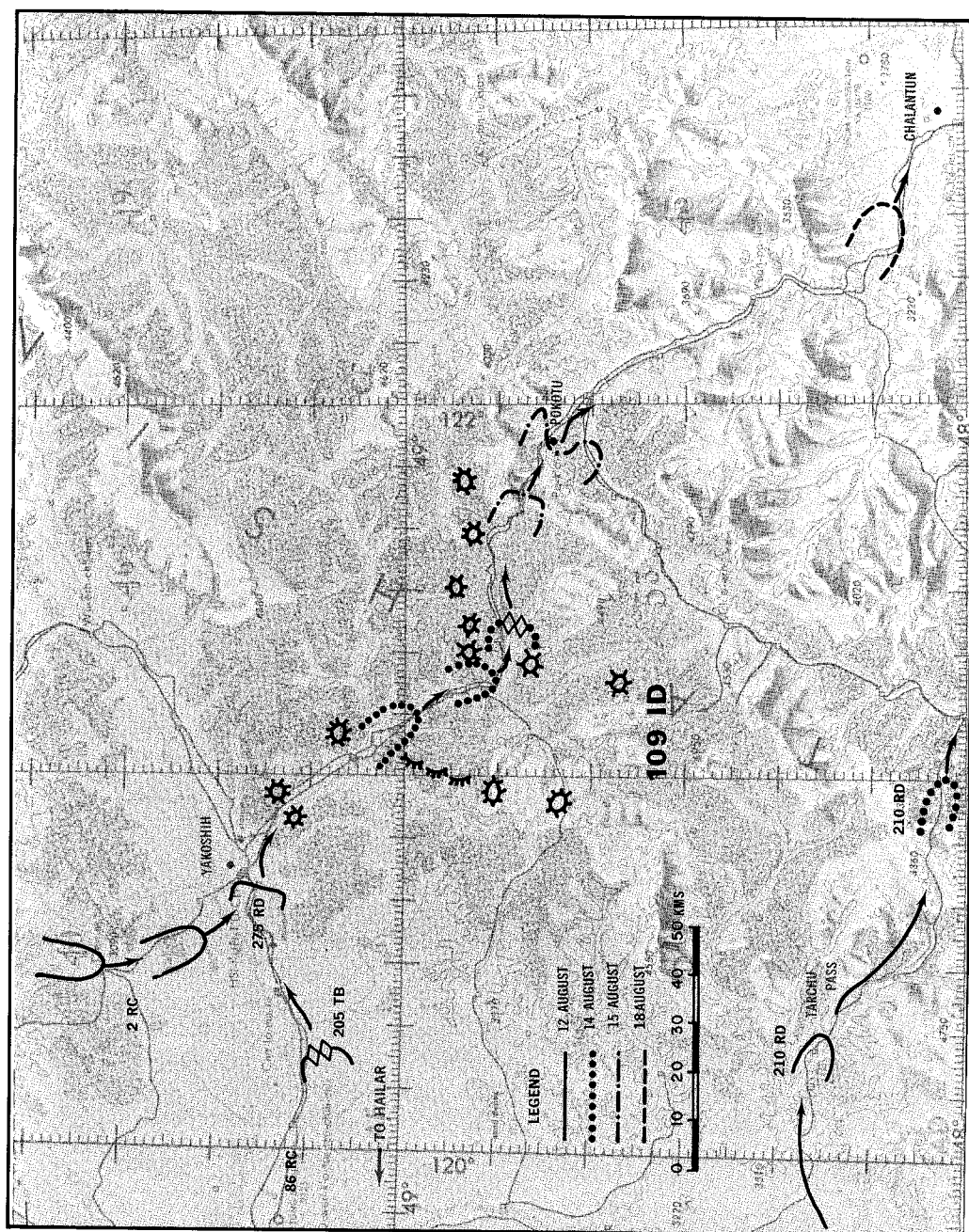


On 13 August, the 39th Army continued its attack to subdue Japanese units at Halung-Arshaan and Solun. During the afternoon, after a powerful artillery and air preparation, Solun fell to assaulting Soviet forces of the 17th Guards Rifle Division and the 44th Tank Brigade. The Soviets repelled several battalion-strength Japanese counterattacks the next day. The 91st and 17th Rifle Divisions of the 5th Guards Rifle Corps initiated the Soviet pursuit from Solun southeastward along the railroad towards Wangyemiao. The 44th Tank Brigade, acting as a forward detachment, spearheaded the attack in coordination with forward detachments from the corps first echelon rifle divisions. Fuel shortages in the 44th Tank Brigade forced the corps commander to create a new forward detachment consisting of the 735th Self-Propelled Artillery Regiment, one artillery battalion, an antitank battalion, and a self-propelled artillery battalion.<sup>21</sup> The march southeastward brought Soviet units into contact with Japanese artillery and infantry units of the 107th Infantry Division and the 2d Raiding Battalion at Tepossi.<sup>22</sup> A battle that night and the following day scattered the Japanese forces. The 19th Rifle Division of 5th Guards Rifle Corps advanced along the railroad west of Solun against Japanese units retreating from the Wuchakou area. These Japanese forces were caught between the 19th Rifle Division and the 124th Rifle Division advancing eastward from the Halung-Arshaan Fortified Region. Meanwhile, the 113th Rifle Corps, led by the 206th Tank Brigade, continued moving toward Wangyemiao. On 15 August, Soviet troops of the 113th Rifle Corps and the 61st Tank Division occupied Wangyemiao. Japanese units, after launching several unsuccessful counterattacks to regain the city, retreated into the hills north of Wangyemiao, where they continued to harass Soviet forces.

On the northern flank of the Trans-Baikal Front, the 36th Army continued its siege of the Hailar fortifications and its difficult advance through the Grand Khingan passes southeast of Yakoshih (see map 25). The 86th Rifle Corps used the 94th and 393d Rifle Divisions with heavy artillery support to continue reducing the Hailar fortifications. Meanwhile, on 12 August, the 2d Rifle Corps, with the 205th Tank Brigade in the lead, battled for and secured Yakoshih. The 275th Rifle Division advanced beyond Yakoshih, but was halted by Japanese forces entrenched near the railroad station at Wunoerh. The next two days (13 and 14 August), the Soviet 2d Rifle Corps battled with the Japanese 119th Infantry Division for possession of the Grand Khingan passes west of Pokotu. Japanese fortified positions lining the roads and railroads through the Grand Khingan passes to the open plain around Pokotu slowed the progress of Soviet units. The battle was intense, and gains were measured in meters.<sup>23</sup>

While the Soviet advance tore into the Kwantung Army, the Japanese government pondered a decision to surrender. The Soviet invasion of Manchuria and the U.S. employment of the atomic bomb were but new disasters





Map 25. Soviet 36th Army Advance from Yakoshih to Chalantun, 12–18 August 1945

heaped upon earlier Japanese defeats. On 14 August, the Japanese contacted the Allied powers and offered to accept the terms the Allies had offered them at Potsdam. The Japanese camp was confused as to the full meaning of the Allied offer. Despite this confusion, on the evening of 14 August the Japanese emperor issued a cease-fire order, which the High Command passed on to units in the field. General Yamada, however, contradicted the order, and the Soviets responded by ordering a continuation of hostilities, which in turn delayed transmission of the cease-fire order to the units. Compounding the communications problem was the fact that many Japanese felt that the call for a cease-fire conflicted with their personal oath of fidelity to the emperor. Concrete cease-fire negotiations with the Soviets opened on 19 August, only after the Imperial High Command had settled the issue of personal oaths.<sup>24</sup>

Amidst the confusion concerning Japanese intentions, the Soviet Far East Command decided to continue the offensive. The rationale was that individual Japanese units continued to resist actively, either in defiance of their government's orders or in ignorance of those orders.<sup>25</sup> While the partially implemented cease-fire order and the impact of the Soviet offensive paralyzed the Japanese Army, the Soviets moved to cement their control over all of Manchuria.

By 14 August, the Trans-Baikal Front had crossed the Grand Khingan Mountains in all sectors. The front now moved to secure the ultimate objectives of the campaign, the cities of Mukden and Changchun. On 15 August, Marshal Malinovsky announced the new objectives in orders that mandated front seizure of Kalgan, Chihfeng, Mukden, Changchun, and Tsitsihar by 23 August.<sup>26</sup> The advance resumed.

On 15 August, the Soviet-Mongolian Cavalry-Mechanized Group, still advancing in two columns on widely separate routes, ran into heavy opposition from the Inner Mongolian 3d, 5th, and 7th Cavalry Divisions at Kanbao. The 27th Motorized Rifle Brigade, forward detachment of the southern column, attempted to dislodge the Mongolians. After two days of heavy battle, General Pliyev's southern column concentrated its forces, defeated the Inner Mongolians, took 1,635 prisoners, and occupied the city.<sup>27</sup> On 18 August the Soviet-Mongolian forces reached the outskirts of Kalgan. Although the Japanese High Command had announced the capitulation of the Kwantung Army on the eighteenth, the defenders of the fortified region northwest of Kalgan did not end their resistance until 21 August. The Soviet-Mongolian Cavalry-Mechanized Group ceremoniously crossed the Great Wall of China and proceeded toward Peking, uniting on the march with units of the Communist Chinese 8th Route Army.\*

\*Communist Chinese forces had been operating in northern China against Japanese forces and against the Nationalist Chinese government of Chiang Kai-shek. After the Soviets had conquered Manchuria they turned captured Japanese equipment over to the Communist Chinese and provided the Communists a base from which to operate against the Nationalist government.

The 17th Army, marching toward Chihfeng, was hindered more by water shortage, intense heat, and sandy terrain conditions than by enemy opposition. After an arduous march, 17th Army units brushed aside light opposition by elements of the Japanese 108th Division and on 17 August occupied Chihfeng. During the following day, 17th Army moved toward the coast, occupying Pingchuan and Linguan and finally reaching the coast at Shanhaikuan opposite the Liaotung Peninsula.



Soviet tanks entering Changchun

On 15 August, the 53d Army, hitherto in second echelon following 6th Guards Tank Army, moved into the yawning gap between the 17th Army and the 6th Guards Tank Army. Its mission was to secure Kailu. The advance was unhindered, and on 1 September 53d Army units occupied Kailu, Chaoyang, Fuhsin, and Gushanbeitseifu. Forward detachments occupied the Chinchou area on the Gulf of Liaotung.

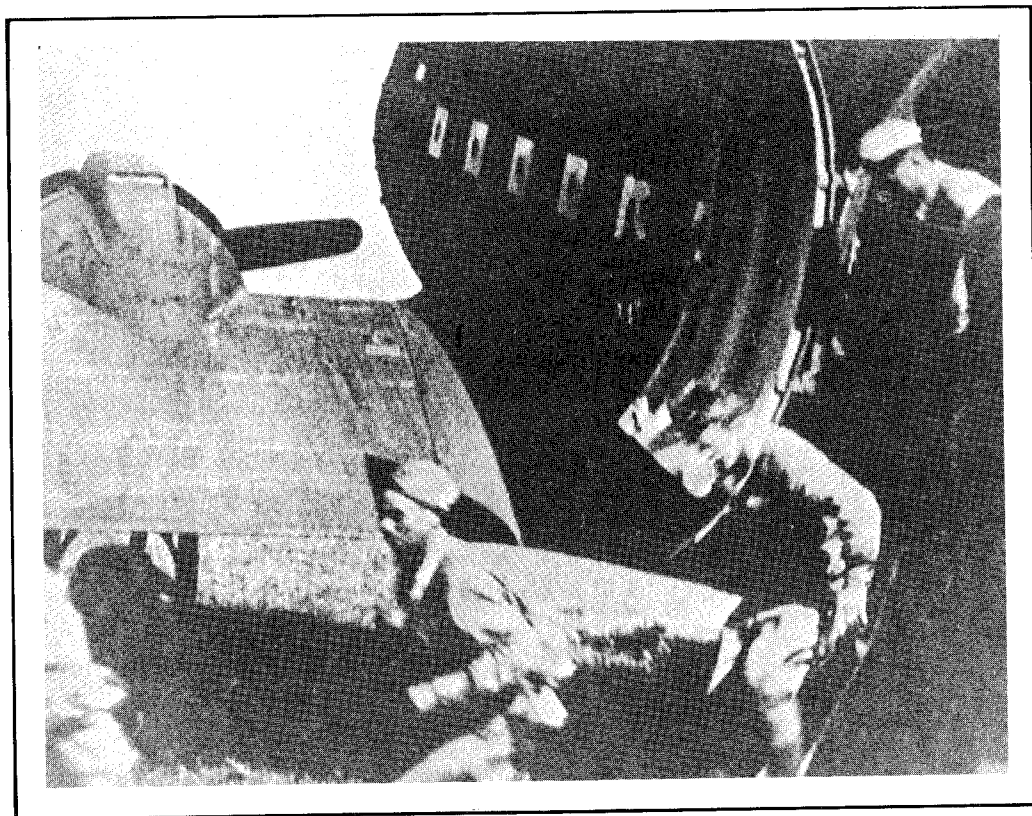
The 6th Guards Tank Army continued its march on 15 August along two axes opposed by decaying elements of the 63d and 117th Japanese Infantry Divisions and Manchurian cavalry forces. The 7th Guards Mechanized Corps moved east toward Changchun, while the 9th Guards Mechanized Corps and 5th Guards Tank Corps moved southeast toward Mukden.



Soviet troops board aircraft for trip to Port Arthur

The gap between the two units was more than 100 kilometers wide. Reconnaissance units (motorcycle battalions), assisted by flights of reconnaissance aircraft, operated between the corps. On 16 August the forward detachments of 5th Guards Tank Corps and 9th Guards Mechanized Corps secured Tungliao and Kaitung, respectively. On the nineteenth the main force closed in on the two cities. From Tungliao the 5th Guards Tank Corps and 9th Mechanized Corps marched in single column along the railroad bed in what was essentially an administrative march on Mukden. On 21 August 6th Guards Tank Army units occupied both Changchun and Mukden, two days after the arrival of Soviet air-landed detachments at both locations. Because of a shortage of fuel, further movement of the 6th Guards Tank Army to Port Arthur and Dalny was by rail.<sup>28</sup>

On 16 August, the 39th Army continued its advance along the railroad from Wangyemiao to Changchun. Significant elements of the army remained in positions along the lines of communications, cleaning up bypassed Japanese and Manchurian forces. Late in the day, the main force forward detachment of 39th Army reached and secured Taonan. Other Soviet forces engaged Japanese units on both sides of the route from Halung-Arshaan to Wangyemiao. A particularly heavy Japanese counterattack was repulsed northwest of Solun. By this time, both divisions of the 94th Rifle Corps had rejoined the army in its main area of operations. The 358th Rifle Division



The air landing at Mukden

of the corps participated in the reduction of the last isolated Japanese positions at Halung-Arshaan, and the 221st Rifle Division, having crossed the Grand Khingans at Tartu Pass, turned south and engaged elements of the Japanese 107th Infantry Division north of Wangyemiao. Main forces of the 39th Army concentrated at Taonan on 17 August, and, on the following day, the forces entrained for movement to Changchun and then to the Liaotung Peninsula. The 94th Rifle Corps, now responsible for mopping up Japanese resistance in the army rear area, reverted to front reserve with

headquarters near Wangyemiao. Remnants of the Japanese 107th Infantry Division continued to resist the 94th Rifle Corps through the remainder of August. On 30 August, the division commander finally surrendered his remaining 7,858 men to the 221st Rifle Division at Chalai, southwest of Tsitsihar.<sup>29</sup>

Heavy Japanese resistance continued in 36th Army sector, both at Hailar Fortified Region and along the road and rail line through the Grand Khingan Mountains to Pokotu. The Japanese 119th Infantry Division's defense of Pokotu in heavy rains held up Soviet forces of the 2d Rifle Corps from 15 to 17 August. After the fall of Pokotu on the seventeenth, Soviet units moved southward and occupied the railroad station at Chalantun. On 18 August Japanese forces began laying down their arms. The 36th Army took 8,438 prisoners at Pokotu and 985 at Chalantun. The 36th Army's movement from Chalantun to Tsitsihar was unopposed and largely administrative. The army occupied its ultimate objective of Tsitsihar on 19 August and took the surrender of 6,000 more Japanese troops.<sup>30</sup> In the rear of 36th Army, intense Japanese resistance continued at Hailar. Using heavy artillery, the 86th Rifle Corps units systematically reduced enemy strongholds in the hills northwest and southwest of the city. Position after position fell under heavy artillery, sapper, and infantry assault. The Soviets snuffed out final Japanese resistance at Hailar on 18 August, when the remaining garrison of 3,827 men surrendered.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, the offensive of the Trans-Baikal Front achieved its objectives well ahead of schedule. For all practical purposes, organized resistance ceased after 18 August. Activity from that time on involved collecting prisoners, disarming Japanese units, and administrative movements to occupy remaining areas of central and southern Manchuria. The success of the Trans-Baikal Front was due primarily to audacious Soviet movement and lackluster Japanese response. In western Manchuria the Japanese were least prepared and hence most surprised. Even after the Japanese had detected the attack by Soviet units, they chose to withdraw their units to central Manchuria and not to contest the Soviet advance. Units left in border regions, such as the 107th Infantry Division and the 80th Independent Mixed Brigade, were overwhelmed initially or isolated, bypassed, and ultimately destroyed. Their resistance, however, did tie up Soviet units. Japanese units that withdrew into Manchuria (117th Infantry Division) or those units already deployed in central Manchuria never significantly opposed the Soviets. By the time Soviet units had reached Taonan and Wangyemiao, cease-fires and prospects for Japanese surrender preempted further Japanese action.

Had Japanese units been positioned to defend in the difficult terrain the Soviets had to traverse, Japanese opposition could have been significant. Even small units deployed in the Khingan mountain passes west of Lupei could have caused severe disruption to the Soviet advance. In light of Soviet

fuel difficulties, units deployed to defend Lupei and Tuchuan could have interfered with the movement of 6th Guards Tank Army at a critical juncture. The resistance Japanese units offered the Soviets at Hailar and Halung-Arshaan showed what such resistance could accomplish. The tenacious 119th Infantry Division defense of the Khingan passes from Yakoshih to Pokotu demonstrated the potential value of resistance on or near the Grand Khingan mountain line. Although, in time, the overwhelming power of the Soviet advance undoubtedly would have prevailed, audacious offensive action by Soviet commanders and uncoordinated indecisive action of the Japanese High Command in the face of insubordination permitted the situation to degenerate rapidly and allowed the Soviets to beat their most optimistic timetable. Trans-Baikal Front action thus became the decisive action in Manchuria, and the scope of overall Soviet victory paralleled that of the Trans-Baikal Front.



